

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

DATE 7 September 2010

CORPORATE DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh
Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

TITLE OF REPORT Applications for Funding from the International
Twinning Budget 2010/2011

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/ 10/119

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to bring before the Committee applications for financial assistance from the 2010/2011 International Twinning Budget and to make recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

6.1.1 ***Kincorth Silver Surfers –educational visit to Regensburg 2010***

It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £3,770 from the 2010/2011 international twinning budget towards the cost of Kincorth Silver Surfers' educational visit to Regensburg.

6.1.2 **Inward visit from Gomel Museum Director and veterans for exhibition launch and further collaboration - February 2011**

It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £4,275 from the 2010/2011 international twinning budget towards the cost an inward visit from Gomel's Museum Director and veterans for the Gordon Highlanders exhibition launch and further collaboration in February 2011.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Finance and Resources Committee approved the International Twinning Budget for 2010/2011 at its meeting of 11 March 2010m. The approved budget, which is from the Common Good Fund, earmarked £72,000 in grants available for financial year 2010/2011. £10,000 of this budget has already been committed to supporting Aberdeen's presence at the festival that accompanies the Offshore Northern Seas exhibition in Stavanger in August 2010, since 2010 is the 20th anniversary of the twinning link between Aberdeen and Stavanger.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The use of the International Twinning Budget to support international activity links closely to several of the Community Plan Challenges, for example, Learning; Arts, Heritage and Sport; Aberdeen's Image; Getting Involved; Being Informed and Leading the City. In the policy statement "Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking", the Council sets out how it aims to make Aberdeen an even better place to live and work. Promoting and supporting international exchanges, involving various communities of interest, contributes to this aim and to the actions of the Single Outcome Agreement. Aberdeen's twin city partnership initiatives:

- foster international understanding and friendship and an appreciation of cultural diversity,
- provide Aberdeen's citizens with an awareness of, and insight into, international issues and perspectives and their impact on Aberdeen and Scotland,
- promote the image and raise the profile of the City overseas; and
- provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, expertise, skills, ideas and best practice in any given field.

Opportunities for City groups and organisations to access twin city projects and possible funding are advertised through the Council's website, press releases, school circulars where appropriate and the ACVO e-bulletin.

In recent years older people have been underrepresented in twinning projects. This report recommends two applications to push forward twinning projects with a strong participation from this age group. This takes into account the need to develop new avenues for twinning activities from this age group, for instance through intergenerational learning projects, given Aberdeen's aging population (15% above 65 years in 2010).

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Health and Safety: The health and safety implications of all visits are taken into account during planning, with any exceptional implications to be addressed at the time of application. Officers regularly review the travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and are in close contact with counterpart officers in the twin cities to ensure information provided to participants is accurate and up-to-date. Participants are offered comprehensive pre-visit briefings by the International Strategist and have the opportunity to ask questions and request support. When participating in overseas visits, Council employees are covered by the Council's insurance policy while non-Council employees are advised to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. The International Strategist carries out a risk assessment process for officer and Elected Member travel on twin city initiatives.

Risk Management: Long-established community links will not be maintained without support from the international budget and people in Aberdeen would lose a wide range of opportunities to engage effectively with the international

community. In addition, incoming visitors to the city on twin city projects support the local economy through their use of the hospitality and retail sectors in particular, and it is important to maintain and build on this added value.

Human Rights, Equalities and Diversity: Aberdeen City Council has in place a range of statutory and discretionary plans, schemes and policies to promote equality. Officers endeavour to target groups and communities which have not previously had experience of international visits or exchanges, or which have been under-represented in twin city activities. Applicants complete an equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the application process.

6. REPORT

6.1- Applications

Ref	Balance of Budget available 2010/2011	£23,669*
6.1.1.	Kincorth Silver Surfers –educational visit to Regensburg 2010	3,770
6.1.2.	Inward visit from Gomel Museum Director and veterans for exhibition launch and further collaboration - February 2011	4,275
	Total of funds applied for	8,045
	Budget balance if all applications are funded	15,624

* This balance takes into account the return of an unused amount of £1150 (approved at the E,P,I committee on 31/05 for the events team to invite Norwegian musicians to the Highland Games).

6.1.1. Kincorth Silver Surfers – Request to support lifelong learning educational visit to Regensburg 2010

Kincorth Silver Surfers, a group of pensioners who meet regularly for computer training are planning an educational visit to Regensburg to “learn about another culture (with emphasis on older learners)”, “... to share social experiences and living up to the ethos of ‘lifelong learning’ (...) and to share memories of war experiences”. The trip is to take place from 10/11 to 16/11/2010.

The total cost of the visit for six participants, including the group’s tutor, is estimated at £4,500. The group’s fundraising and the participants’ own contribution amount to £730. Kincorth Silver Surfers are therefore applying for the balance of £3,770.

This is well beyond the normal 50% of the total cost usually set as a cap on twinning grants but the applicants’ age (between 65 and 87 years) and socioeconomic situation should be taken into account. As the application states:

“All of the group are retired local pensioners who are getting by on their state pension – therefore are by no means well off”.

The breakdown of the costs is the following:

		£
1	Flights for 6 people @£250	1,500
2	Taxis from and to airport	240
3	Accommodation for 5 nights @£225/person	1,350
4	Local transport at £5/day	150
5	Meals at £35/day for 5 days	1,260
	Total Cost	4,500
	Fund raising and participants contributions	-730
	Balance applied for	3,770

The project of the visit builds on a ‘pen friendship’ established by the most senior member of the group who had attended a learning centre in Regensburg.

Activities included in the visit are:

1. A visit to Regensburg’s local adult education centre to meet
 - a) the older learners' English language class
 - b) the older learners' computing group
2. A visit to the local kennel club - older members of the group and their new contacts share a mutual interest in this.
3. A visit to a local school for inter-generational experience sharing
4. Other activities discussed were an interest in local folk dance and costume and photography - still to be arranged

On their return, the participants will share their experience in meetings with other pensioners in Kincorth and Torry Learning House. The group’s tutor also plans to hold a meeting with officers of the Education, Culture and Sports directorate of the City Council to share their experience and ideas on the benefits of their visit in Regensburg and of twinning exchanges for lifelong learning.

The group’s members are also going to use the whole planning and visit as evidence towards SQA qualifications.

It should be noted that in the past the Council’s twinning programme featured a specific strand for pensioners with annual ‘Senior Citizens Twinning Visits’ organised by the officer responsible for twinning partnerships. This particular strand of the twinning programmes was ended in 2003 and since then there has been less pro-active support to projects specifically for older people.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £3,770 from the 2010/2011 international twinning budget towards the cost of Kincorth Silver Surfers' educational visit to Regensburg.

6.1.2. Inward visit from Gomel Museum Director and veterans for exhibition launch and further collaboration - February 2011

From February to June 2011 the Gordon Highlanders Museum will be displaying an exhibit on Gomel's experiences of occupation and liberation during the Second World War. In June 2010, Jesper Ericsson, the Curator of The Gordon Highlanders Museum, visited Gomel to formally establish a partnership between The Gordon Highlanders Museum and the Gomel Regional Museum of Military Glory with regard to the Gomel exhibition in 2011, as well as to establish future co-operation on Museum projects and exhibitions (see report on visit attached in annex).

As the application states: "The exhibition is being specifically held in the spring of 2011 to mark the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the invasion of Belarus by National-Socialist Germany, a hugely significant date for the countries of the former Soviet Union. It would be only fitting that the Director of the Gomel Regional Museum of Military Glory, who has so kindly agreed to loan The Gordon Highlanders Museum a large number of items, should open the exhibition and invited veterans be a part of this most important occasion".

This commemoration at the Gordon Highlanders Museum marks the development of a new dimension of the twinning relationship as discussed with the Gomel Executive Committee in June 2010 in the build up to the 20th anniversary of the twinning link and the visit to Aberdeen of Gomel's new Mayor, Viktor Pilipets in September 2010.

This visit would mark for Aberdeen a new dimension of twinning projects with Gomel both in terms of educational projects on shared history and veteran exchanges. The visit activities will include the opening of the exhibit at the Gordon Highlanders museum, meetings between veterans from Gomel and Aberdeen to establish a relationship between veteran organisations in both cities and work meetings to develop school exchanges through history projects.

Besides strengthening the already existing school exchanges by developing new cultural understanding through educational projects on History, this visit will develop twinning links between senior citizens of both cities.

The funds applied for are to invite the Director of Gomel's Regional Museum of Military Glory (which is lending the items to be displayed at the Gordon Highlanders Museum), 3 veterans and an interpreter.

The Gordon Highlanders Museum is already committing £5000 towards the exhibit (of which £975 will go directly to the exhibit opening ceremony). As an independent self-financed museum, governed by a charitable trust, the Museum

cannot afford to contribute more to the costs of inviting the delegation from Gomel and are seeking a further £800 from fundraising to contribute to the costs. The total cost of the visit is of £6050 and the application to the twinning grant is for the balance of £4275.

The total cost of the visit is of

		£
1	Flights for 5 people @£420	2,100
2	Visas @ £75/person	375
3	Taxis from and to airport	100
4	Accommodation for 5 nights @£300/person	1,500
5	Local transport at £5/day	125
6	Meals at £35/day for 5 days	875
7	Hire of the Sir Jack Hayward Room, drinks (wine and soft), sandwiches*	600
8	Staff time and volunteer time*	300
9	Cost of invitations and postage	75
	Total Cost	6,050
	Museum's direct contribution	-975
	Museum fundraising and donations	-800
	Balance applied for	4,275

* Costs are based on 80 people attending, 24 hours of permanent staff time and 16 hours of volunteer time.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee approve a contribution of £4,275 from the 2010/2011 international twinning budget towards the cost an inward visit from Gomel's Museum Director and veterans for the Gordon Highlanders exhibition launch and further collaboration in February 2011.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. **Older Learners: Issues and Perspectives** by Alexandra Withnall, Keele University:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/lifelong-learning/papers/392BB376-000D-5D44-0000015700000157.html>

2. **Report on the visit to Gomel in June 2010** by Jesper Ericsson, Curator of The Gordon Highlanders Museum (see annex below)

Annex:

Report on the visit to Gomel in June 2010 by Jesper Ericsson, Curator of The Gordon Highlanders Museum

My visit to Gomel was extremely useful and very important. An informal link between The Gordon Highlanders Museum and the Gomel Regional Museum of Military Glory was established in 2008, with a small-scale 3-month loan of items from Aberdeen to Gomel.

The proposed exhibition on the town of Gomel during the Great Patriotic War, due to run from February to June 2011 at The Gordon Highlanders Museum, is a much more complex and large-scale affair, especially due to the international and formal nature of the loan of items that will be necessary for the display to go ahead.

The chance to meet directly with the Director of the Gomel Regional Museum of Military Glory, Pavel Zhdanovich, talk through the loan and exhibition, and to see the items, which he is so kindly sending, was utterly invaluable. A great personal relationship was established, which will allow and facilitate future projects as well as this one. The meetings that were undertaken allowed me to start planning the exhibition as soon as I returned to Aberdeen.

Another invaluable aspect to the trip was the chance to meet fellow Museum counterparts and see how the Gomel Regional Museum of Military Glory handles, interprets and displays its history and items. This experience was fascinating and gave me a great many ideas and insights into how the Second World War affected Belarus and especially Gomel, and how this is presented to the public and to school children today. The chance to visit the Gomel archives was also extremely interesting and gave me the opportunity to see how archivists work and their preservation techniques.

In addition, being given the chance to meet veterans of both the Second World War and the Cold War was an honour, and I came away with the hope that some kind of relationship could be established between veteran's organisations in the North East and Gomel.

Only by visiting Gomel could I fully appreciate the impact of the Second World War on the town and how it has affected the generations of inhabitants in the decades after 1945. It was vital to be able to see and feel how the Second World War is taught in schools and presented to the public through museums, so that the planned display in 2011 at The Gordon Highlanders Museum, timed to commemorate both the 70th anniversary of the start of The Great Patriotic War and to continue the 20th anniversary of the twinning of Aberdeen and Gomel, will honestly and accurately reflect the subject which is being displayed.

This is a unique opportunity for The Gordon Highlanders Museum to host an exhibition about Gomel during the Second World War, a subject that has never been explored anywhere outside Belarus before. It is also a phenomenal opportunity to further strengthen the cultural ties between Aberdeen and Gomel, as well as the link between our two museums. This could only have been achieved at a personal level and I look forward very much to future co-operations.

The visit was for me deeply moving and has given me an extra drive and enthusiasm for the upcoming exhibition. The war on the Eastern Front was so horribly different to anywhere else, perhaps only on a par with the war against the Japanese with regard to the brutality of the conflict and the devastation wrought on civilians. To be able to walk on the battlefields in and around Gomel and try to imagine what went on there 70 years ago was both humbling and extraordinary.

Jesper Ericsson, Aberdeen, August 2010